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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: VERHEUGEN'S TURKEY TRIP AND DUTCH NGO STUDY

REF: A. FBIS: EU SHOULD DELAY ACCESSION TALKS WITH

TURKEY EUP20040825000245

[¶](#)B. USEU-TODAY 8/27/2004

Classified By: USEU/POL, Harry O'Hara, 1.4 b/d

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: DG-Enlargement Commissioner Verheugen will use his September 4-7 trip to Turkey to review the Commission's human rights and political concerns, which he hopes will further enhance his credibility before the European Council, the European Parliament and, ultimately, "European public opinion" when he talks to them about Turkey's candidacy for EU membership this fall. The Commission official responsible for preparing the Commission's analysis on Turkey's EU candidacy in the EU told us that while the recent Dutch study (ref A) had no influence on the Commission, it could effect EU political discussion on Turkey if the Dutch government uses its EU Presidency position to promote it. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) A key DG-Enlargement official told us that the just-released Dutch Advisory Council on International Affairs Group Study on Turkey (recommending that the EU not give Turkey an accession date in December) would have no/no influence on the Commission. Speaking unofficially, he noted that the study, if adopted by the Dutch government, could influence how the Dutch Presidency shapes the EU's political discussion over Turkey, especially after the October 6 recommendation by the Commission and before an anticipated final decision by European heads of state at the December 17 European Council. The DG-Enlargement official also said that the Commission had been briefed on the study. He also told us that he expects additional "advocacy" and "experts" studies on Turkey and the EU in coming weeks and that the Commission would seek to avoid commenting on any of them.

[¶](#)3. C) Besides preparing the report on Turkey's accession to the EU, the Commission is also preparing for DG-Enlargement Commissioner Verheugen's September 4-7 trip to Turkey. The Commissioner will visit Izmir, Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakir, an ethnic Kurdish area. Our Commission interlocutor told us that this visit is a part of the Commission's regular political dialogue with Turkey that recently included joint seminars (e.g. cultural rights) and meetings in Brussels. Recent meetings have concentrated on freedom of press, civil-military relations, and freedom of religion. Our Commission interlocutor commented that the quality of EU-Turkey discussion on these issues and "human rights in general" is "much better" and "more open" than it was two years ago.

[¶](#)4. (C) Although not all details of Verheugen's schedule in Turkey have been finalized, his plan is to meet with FM Gul and a wide range of religious leaders. As noted in ref B, Verheugen hopes to further enhance his credibility before the European Council, the European Parliament and, ultimately, "European public opinion" when he talks to them about Turkey's candidacy for EU membership this fall. In addition, the Commission expects the results of Verheugen's trip to feed into the debate by EU experts on Southern and Eastern Europe (COSEE) at their next meeting on September 10.

MCKINLEY